



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCI**  
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans  
**CHRISTOPHER GRAU**  
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars  
**CLAYTON E. UZELL**  
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America  
**BOB POTTS**  
COMMISSIONER

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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Email: [vscmail@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:vscmail@cuyahogacounty.us)  
1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

### MINUTES

DATE/TIME: March 6, 2019 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:**

Clay Uzell, President  
Mel Baher, Vice President  
Christopher Grau, Secretary  
Frank Pocci, Commissioner  
Bob Potts, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Brian Gutkoski, Asst. County Prosecutor

EXCUSED: None

VISITORS: None

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Clay Uzell followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Bob Potts to dispense with the reading of the Consent Agenda and to accept the agenda with the necessary corrections and/or additions. (All Commissioners have a copy of the minutes.) Several items from correspondence were set aside for discussion in Executive Session.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:**

#### Christopher Grau – DAV

- February 6th – I attended the CCVSC public meeting.
- February 13th – The CCVSC Appeals Meeting was cancelled – no appeals.
- February 19<sup>th</sup> – I provided referral of Thomas Henry Clyde, USA, Korean War Vet (deceased, for son Michael) for assistance in obtaining Purple Heart.
- February 19<sup>th</sup> – I recused myself from the JVC meeting pending outcome of confidential VSC administrative matter.

- February 21<sup>st</sup> – I attended DAV Chapter 108 monthly meeting.
- February 23<sup>rd</sup> – I attended the new VSC Commissioner training in Westerville, Ohio.
- February 27<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Appeals meeting.

#### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- I gave the financial report for Post 80 on March 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The honor guard served funeral duties at the Ohio Western Reserve Cemetery.
- Plans are being made for dinner to honor the Post honor guard in the spring.
- I attended the funeral of a deceased AMVETS member.

#### Other Activities

- During February I attended all the scheduled CCVSC meetings.
- I attended the Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) monthly meeting. As finance officer I also completed and presented our financial report.
- I visited the Parma CBOC as well as the Wade Park Veterans hospital and visited with a veteran and former employee of the CCVSC there. He was extremely happy with the care he is receiving at the hospital.
- I attended the February meeting of the Catholic War Veterans.

**AMVETS NEWS – AMVETS National Headquarters, March 4, 2019** – Prior to AMVETS annual ‘Storm the Hill’ (a week-long legislation advocacy event on Capitol Hill) meetings, the organization hired former military fellow and Navy veteran Thomas Himes to the position of National Legislative Associate.

Himes attended basic training just weeks before the attacks on September 11. After several years, his naval service brought him to the Middle East, where he served as a small boat engineer, accompanying SEAL Team 4 on search and seizure operations. He was also among those dispatched to shore up security in the aftermath of an attack on Iraq’s oil terminals. After leaving the Navy, Himes turned to a career in journalism. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and became an investigative reporter for newspapers in Los Angeles and Florida. As waves of veterans returned home from the wars abroad, he wrote reports that drew attention to their struggles. His work exposing government corruption and injustice led to him receiving journalism awards and community recognition.

#### Bob Potts – VVA

- February 5<sup>th</sup> – the Chapter 249 Board and Membership meeting decision was made to investigate moving Chapter home to American Legion 385 Bay Village.
- February 6<sup>th</sup> – I attended CCVSC open public meeting.
- February 13<sup>th</sup> – CCVSC appeals meeting – cancelled.
- February 20<sup>th</sup> – I attended CCVSC open public meeting
- February 27<sup>th</sup> - I attended CCVSC appeals meeting.
- March 1<sup>st</sup> – I attended the wake of Alan Valenzano who was a classmate and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of Chapter 249.
- March 2<sup>nd</sup> – I attended Al’s funeral.
- March 4<sup>th</sup> – I attended Al’s interment at Rittman National Cemetery.
- March 7<sup>th</sup> – Moved Chapter home at American Legion Post 385 at 7 p.m.

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- I attended all scheduled meetings of the CCVSC during the month of February 2019. Following is a report of my activities outside of the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for the month of February 2019.

- Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – I attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Council meeting held at American Legion Post 304, in Garfield Hts., Ohio. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. I presented the executive board approved financial reports for December 2018, as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup> – I attended the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. and I presented the current membership report, as Post 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander.
- Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup> – I departed for Washington, DC to attend the American Legion National Winter Conference, held at the Washington Hilton hotel.
- Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – As an American Legion National appointee, I attended the National Security Council meeting held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> – I was on Capitol Hill visiting Ohio 9<sup>th</sup> District Representative Marcy Kaptur. Our American Legion group discussed issues important to Veterans that needed consideration by Congress in its 116<sup>th</sup> assembly. We also met with Ohio 5<sup>th</sup> District Robert Lattas' Legislative Assistant Mike Davin to go over the same issues. I returned home Tuesday evening.
- Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> – I attended the American Legion Post 91 executive board meeting at 7:00 p.m. I presented an updated membership report, as Post 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander.
- Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – Was the scheduled American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Executive board meeting – however, I was unable to attend due to my trip to Washington, DC.

#### Clay Uzell – VFW

- February 6<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC first Open Public meeting.
- February 6<sup>th</sup> – I attended the VFW Auxiliary Past Presidents Dinner at Antonio's Restaurant in Parma.
- February 10<sup>th</sup> – I attended the VFW Post 7536 meeting. We went over programs covered during the year, nominations of Post Officers coming up at the next meeting, and gave the Auxiliary \$300.00 toward Patriots Pen contest awards.
- February 20<sup>th</sup> - I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- February 27<sup>th</sup> - I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.

-I made 14 hospital visits and 2 nursing home visits.

-I referred one client to the CBOC.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. The Director left two messages for a former employee who received an overpayment, but did not receive a call back. The situation will be referred back to the County Prosecutor.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. The Executive Director presented the 2020 Budget. The Budget was reviewed. The Board advised the Executive Director to prepare for an increase of up to 7.5% in pay for all employees. Final decision will be made by December of 2019. The Board will review additional budget items prior to submission to County Council.
2. The Executive Director presented the Board with recommended organizational changes. Further discussion will take place in Executive Session.

#### **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

None.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Chris Grau to go in to Executive Session to consider employment, discipline and/or dismissal of a public employee.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:46 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:30 a.m.

In Executive Session personnel issues were discussed and the Executive Director was instructed on how to proceed.

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Frank Pocci to refuse the email resignation of the Financial Operations Manager and proceed with dismissal.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Bob Potts to reclassify the position of Financial Operations Manager from classified to unclassified pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 124.11(A)(8).

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Frank Pocci to select Charlene Amos for the position of Service Department Manager, effective March 6, 2019. This position will carry a probationary period of 180 days, but will be reviewed after 90 days. Ms. Amos will begin reporting to main office on March 18, 2019.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to adopt the new Organizational Chart as presented with changes.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

The Board conducted interviews for the position of County Veterans Service Officer.

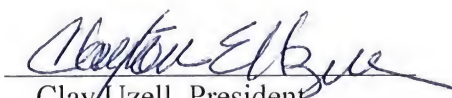
A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Frank Pocci to select Jeffrey Toll and Jeffrey Goforth as County Veterans Service Officers and to bring them on board immediately.

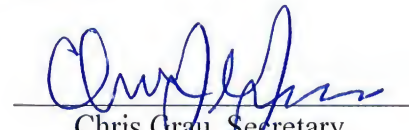
AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

National Association of County Veteran Service Officer training will be held in Cleveland in June. The Executive Director recommended that all VSC offices close during training so all employees may attend.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Chris Grau to adjourn the meeting at 12:16 p.m.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

  
Clay Uzell, President

  
Chris Grau, Secretary

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Requests for Financial Assistance/

Filing claims with the Dept. of

Veterans' Affairs/Memorial Affairs:

Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-2639)

Finance Dept.:  
Social Work Dept.:  
Executive Director:  
Commissioners:

Steve Fernandez, Finance Operations Mgr. (216-698-2391)  
Terry Walker, Social Worker/Case Mgmt.) (216-698-2379)  
Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)  
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)